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SUCCESS STORY

USAID launches Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Alliance at “Rebuild Iraq 2006”

USAID/Iraq launches its first Global Development Alliance (GDA) activity, aimed at strengthening the IT sector in Iraq.



The Iraq ICT Alliance is a public-private sector partnership working to promote information and communications technology development in Iraq.

The Alliance brings together multinational companies, international donor agencies, and Iraqi government, business, and educational organizations to encourage greater collaboration and cooperation to implement information systems and improve technical skills in Iraq.

For more information:
www.iraqictalliance.org



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Amman, Jordan – According to participants, one of the most successful events of the 2006 “Rebuild Iraq” Conference and Exhibition, held from May 8-11, was USAID’s Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Alliance Conference held at the Intercontinental Hotel on May 8. “Rebuild Iraq” saw some 1,000 companies from over 50 countries participate in the third annual event aimed at fostering business relationships and promoting economic development in Iraq.

Representatives from Cisco Systems, Computer Associates, Intel, Sun Microsystems, HP, Microsoft, Motorola, BearingPoint and Oracle engaged in serious discussions with Iraqi government officials and businesspeople, as well as several experts from USAID and the United Nations. For over seventy delegates, this event was the first time that officials from American and Iraqi IT companies came together for such a purpose to establish business linkages in addition to promoting development projects.

While Iraqi speakers at the ICT Alliance were candid about the daily challenges they face, this was neither the emphasis of the conference, nor the focus. Instead, they shared the many ways in which they have overcome the obstacles. The owner of a Baghdad-based IT firm formatted his talk as “a day in my life”, and with strong conviction and a good sense of humor, shared his daily struggles; which included power outages, unpredictable shipments and temperamental generators. Yet his emphasis was on what he manages to achieve, not what stands in his way.

A US corporate manager exclaimed that of all the “Rebuild Iraq” events over the past three years, the USAID ICT Alliance conference was the single best he attended. Asked why, he replied “this was a room full of professionals in the IT industry from all over the world”, noting that the format fostered real dialogue and valuable sharing of information. The vice president of an Iraqi IT company in turn explained that an event like the ICT Alliance is “winning the peace one mind at a time”.

As a direct result of the ICT Alliance conference, a pilot project to promote development in the IT sector will be launched with cooperation from the partners. The Alliance website will also serve as a tool to promote this initiative and encourage collaboration among the members. In addition, planning has already started for the agreed-upon follow-up meeting, to take place in Iraq in a few months’ time.